

AGENDA

New York

FRESH AIR FUN
TIME TO START PLANNING THOSE
OUTDOOR EVENTS

**THE
SPORTING LIFE**
EVENT VENUES WITH SPORTS THEMES

**SAILING INTO
SUMMER**
HOLDING AN EVENT ON A YACHT

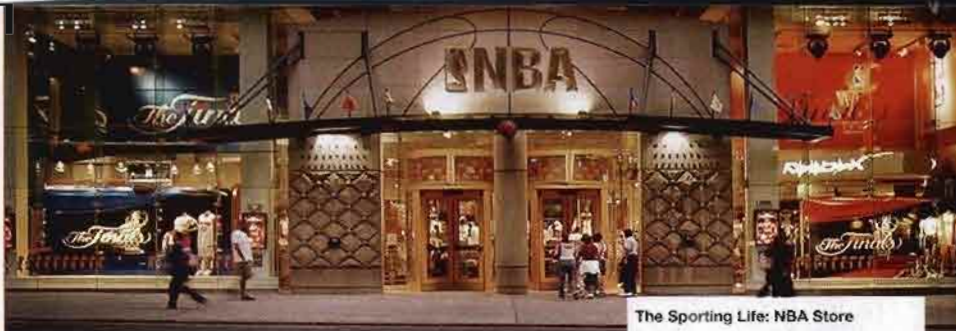
**TRI-STATE
HOTEL UPDATE**
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It's time to take advantage of the season and start planning those long-awaited outdoor events.



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It's no coincidence that New York is home to some of the country's greatest sports franchises—New Yorkers take their games seriously. It's only natural that some of these celebrated venues should make terrific sites for special events.

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New York's hotel market is constantly evolving, with a steady stream of new openings, renovations, and upgrades. Here is a roundup of some of the new developments at hotels in New York City, as well as the surrounding areas of New Jersey and Connecticut.



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Planners looking to hold an event on a yacht this season have plenty of options. Here's a brief roundup of some of the yachts you'll see plying the waterways this year.

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The Cradle of Aviation offers a unique meetings experience in a world-class aviation museum.



LOCAL TALENT: CASHING IN ON CVBS

Convention and Visitors Bureaus are valuable resources for event and meeting planners

BY SARA EVANS

Long gone are the days when CVBs were manned by decorative local ladies, whose part-time avocation was to pick-up the occasional phone call and relay information about the nearest convention center. Today's CVBs are dynamic and proactive, staffed by well-trained and well-informed professionals who interface with an astounding range of local businesses, venues and events experts to maximize each corporate and private visit to their locality. They know that attracting large groups to their community is big business. They also know that competition for meetings and conventions business is fierce. In and around New York City, there is an impressive range of venues and facilities, all vying for the same business.

CVBs offer local maps and community calendars often pegged to such seasonal events as garden tours, foliage festivals or harvest celebrations, along with a full

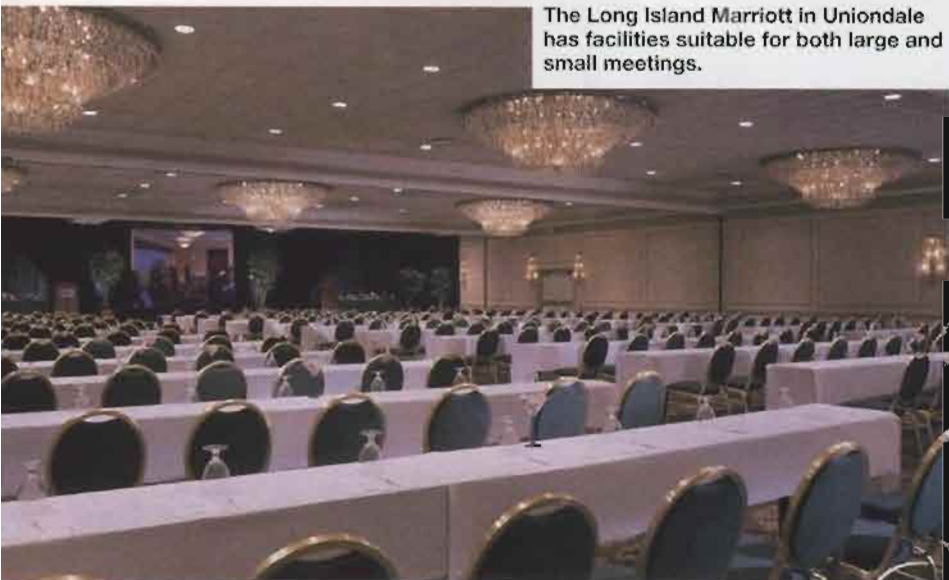
range of contacts, service reps and sources. They provide comprehensive lists of meeting and convention facilities, conference centers, hotels, restaurants, motels, inns and bed-and-breakfasts as well as local attractions, such as wineries, historic houses and museums.

Along with attracting groups with the convenience, appeal and uniqueness of their locales, CVBs and their knowledgeable staffers provide important information regarding the available range of support services: audio/visual experts, video-conferencing, video-recording crews, printers, local service staff, ground transportation and local talent for entertainment. They can supply comprehensive lists of caterers and floral designers, as well as great local sources for appropriate gifts and goodies.

All of this means that CVBs are important sources of information for



TOP: Montauk Manor, on the eastern tip of Long Island, provides a spectacular vista for meetings. BOTTOM: The Inn at East Wind in Wading River includes a fabulous spa for indulging after a day of meetings. Pictured here is the Grand Ballroom. All photos in this article are courtesy of The Long Island Convention & Visitors Bureau.



The Long Island Marriott in Uniondale has facilities suitable for both large and small meetings.

planners of both corporate and private events. According to Kristen Matejka, who is Director of Marketing and Communications for the Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, organizations such as hers provide the ideal conduit between local promotional organizations and meetings and events planners. "We provide familiarization and informational tours to acquaint planners with our localities and give them a clear overview of our regions and all they have to offer. We respond quickly to RFP's, tailoring our local resources to the needs of each corporate client. We help planners analyze and refine their needs and steer them toward the most appropriate facilities in our areas. Using the guidelines we are given, we find optimum locations and prices for each event and meeting." Members of local CVBs escort planners on site inspections and help in crafting each event and meeting to the specific needs of the group. Ideally, Kristen Matejka notes, planners should give local CVBs three-months' lead-time, in order to get the best deals and broadest range of choices. (However, realistically, many events do happen on shorter notice.)

Representatives from local CVBs are invaluable when it comes to coordinating special aspects of meetings, such as golf outings and attendance at sports or entertainment events. They will also plan spousal programs for those whose

mates are busy in meetings, and even help find child-care if necessary. Not only do regional planners work to promote large hotels and meetings facilities, they are also happy to work with smaller groups and provide meeting and event information for much smaller venues, such as inns and bed-and-breakfasts. Funded by local hotel taxes and membership dues, local convention and visitors bureaus work hard to help planners create and stay within realistic budgets. They realize that these vary widely, and work hard to accommodate both lavish and budget-bound events.

By working closely with regional advisors, meeting and events planners can refine their goals and wishes. Regional CVBs are an enormously rich resource—one that is often overlooked. Have you thought of a wine-tasting? Did you know there is a tennis tournament nearby during the week of your meeting? Would you like your meetings videotaped and relayed in real time? Would you like each participant to return home with a meaningful memento of the event? Your local CVB representative can connect you with an extraordinary range of resources and facilitators. By fully coordinating with local contacts, event planners not only can optimize each off-site experience for their companies, they can also streamline their workload—and have fun putting the whole show together.

Here is a short-list of organizations that offer support and information for event planners in the Greater New York Metropolitan area.

C H E C K L I S T

NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAUS: 1-800-258-3582.

(www.Newyorkmeetings.com) This organization provides a region-by-region overview with statewide links.

BUCKS COUNTY: 888 359-9110.

(www.experiencebuckscounty.com) Contact: David Jackson (david@bccvb.org).

GREATER HARTFORD CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU: 860 728-6789.

(www.enjoyhartford.com) Contact: Michael Van Parys (mvp@hartfordcvb.org).

LONG ISLAND CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU: 631 952-3900.

(www.funonli.com) Contact: Bridget Dunwell (bdunwell@funonli.com).

ATLANTIC CITY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU: 609 449-7136.

(www.atlanticcitynj.com or www.accva.com) Contact: Mike Reynolds (mreynolds@accva.com).

BRONX TOURISM COUNCIL: 718 537-6621.

(www.ilovethebronx.com) Contact: Doris Quinones (dquinones@boedc.org).

NYC&CO.: 212 484-1218.

(www.nycvisit.com) Contact: Tim McGuinness (tmcguinness@nycvisit.com).

DUTCHESS COUNTRY: 845 463-4000.

(www.dutchesstourism.com) Contact: Jennie Donohue (jdonohue@dutchesstourism.com).

WESTCHESTER COUNTY: 914 995-8800.

(www.westchestergov.com and see also www.westchester.com) Contact: Kim Sinistore (KAB6@westchestergov.com).

STAMFORD: 203-359-4761.

(www.stamfordchamber.com) Contact: Barbara Seiter (bseiter@stamfordchamber.com).